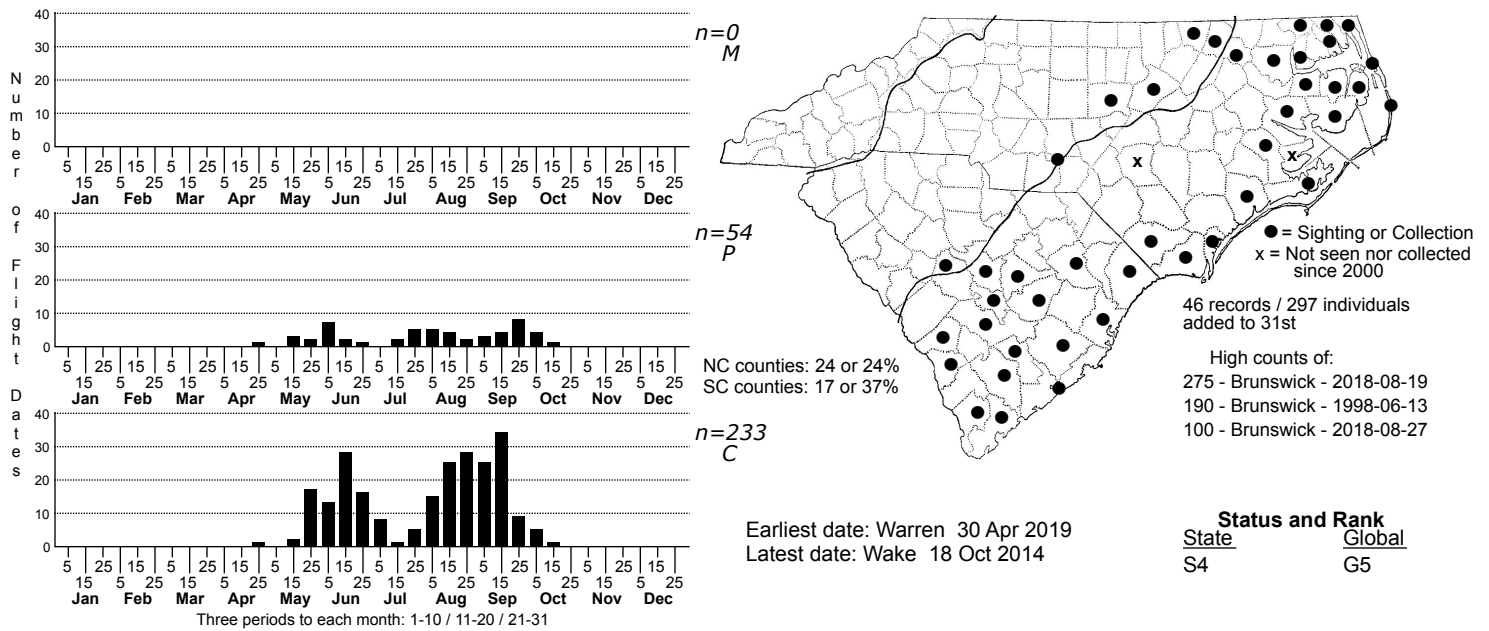


## Broad-winged Skipper *Poanes viator*



**DISTRIBUTION:** Mainly restricted to the tidewater section of the state, from the VA border to the SC line. However, the range is slowly spreading inland (westward), into the eastern Piedmont now. In 2001, the species was found in Richmond County along the Pee Dee River, a first record for the Piedmont. In 2004, a colony was discovered in southeastern Chatham County; another colony was discovered in neighboring Wake County in 2009, and a second one was found in Wake in 2010. Several additional inland colonies were found in Halifax County in 2012, and a new slightly inland site was found in Columbus County in 2013. One seen in 2019 at Kerr Lake in northwestern Warren County extends the inner edge of the range westward, near the VA border. Certainly now, an old record for Cumberland County was likely not just an inland "fluke" or a stray, though disappointingly there are no more recent records for this or adjacent counties.

**ABUNDANCE:** Common to locally abundant in tidal marshes. Away from tidal marshes, very rare to locally numerous, but only near stands of its robust grass foodplant (mainly along lake and pond shores and along rivers).

**FLIGHT PERIOD:** Two broods. Flight dates in coastal areas range from mid- or late May (sparingly from late April) to early July, and late July to late September (rarely to mid-October). The gap between broods is very small. The Piedmont records fall between the end of April and mid-October, with a seemingly early (as compared with the lower Coastal Plain) gap in late June and early July. The Piedmont gap between broods ought to also be around mid-July, and thus first brood individuals should occur there into early July (with more field work).

**HABITAT:** This is a species of tall grasses of the fresh to brackish marshes near the coast. It also is found in ditches near marshes, but it is generally found near Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Big Cordgrass (*Spartina cynosuroides*), and other marsh grasses at least 5 feet tall. Inland colonies have all been found very close to, or within, stands of Southern Wild-rice (*Zizaniopsis miliacea*). These habitats inland tend to be along edges of lakes and ponds, or close to rivers -- all in rather sunny conditions.

**FOOD AND NECTAR PLANTS:** The foodplant is mainly Common Reed, but Big Cordgrass is used, as well as other tall grasses (e.g., Southern Wild-rice in the Piedmont). The species nectars on many plants; Camphorweeds (*Pluchea* spp.) are commonly used, as are Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.), thistles (*Cirsium* spp.), and others.

**COMMENTS:** This species can be quite common near Common Reed, an introduced species in NC that is spreading in our marshes. It is likely that the Broad-winged Skipper is more common in the state than formerly, as it has spread along with the reed. This is often the most frequently seen butterfly in tall brackish marshes, such as at Eagles Island (Brunswick County) and in the Currituck Sound area. The Southern Wild-rice appears to be spreading inland, and even though it is a native grass, it appears to readily colonize some lake and pond margins, as well as some sandbars and edges of rivers, as long as the conditions are open and sunny. As a result, the occurrence of Broad-winged Skippers well inland near the Fall Line is presumed to be a recent phenomenon; this large and slow-flying skipper would have been hard to overlook by earlier collectors and biologists prior to 2000.